

POWER POINT PRESENTATION AS AN ASSIGNMENT TO IMPROVE LANGUAGE FLUENCY IN A TERTIARY LEVEL CLASS ROOM OF ENGINEERS

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ABSTRACT

English language speaking ability is a must for the tertiary level students in Bangladesh and it is one of the key competencies that they are going to need for a lifetime as after this level they are going to enter into the realm of employment. This paper aims to show a view of how to improve the speaking skills of English language in tertiary level taking repeated power point presentation as an assignment to improve their fluency in English language. It is experimental in nature that involves 280 students who are the subject of this research. This research will provide a needs analysis sheet that was given to the students before starting the class to understand the needs of the students and after the end of the class as an assessment tool a survey was run and some of the students were selected for an interview so that the response will be cross checked to demonstrate to what extent power point presentation have benefited the students after practicing the above activity for a certain time. As the students' common reply in the needs analysis sheet was that they want to be a good communicator who have proper fluency while speaking to keep the communication on going, for that reason one activity which was power point presentation was chosen to make them benefited. The survey analysis data sheet and also the suggestion list from the students' part that illustrate the feelings of the students from which the idea whether the activity practiced by the students for a certain time was effective or not has been recognized. The result is good, not altogether flawless, but it can be used while planning any activity for other groups.

KEYWORDS: *English Language, Power Point Presentation & Communication*

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INTRODUCTION

English is surely not our mother tongue, but unofficially it has taken the status of second language in our country, so no doubt that we need it for our education and employment. In Bangladesh the medium of instruction in tertiary level is in English, though Bangladeshi students study English as a second language from class one to class twelve. When Bangladeshi mainstream students come to Tertiary level they had a different mindset towards language education especially English. They want to speak in English and have a good command over all the four skills of this particular language as this is quite mandatory for them to achieve the skills mentioned above for their employability. Tertiary level students of Bangladesh have a different expectation from the courses they are offered, after studying English for 12 years in primary, secondary and higher secondary level when they come to the tertiary level they think that they can achieve the skills of this language overnight. In a public university context in Bangladesh, where students come to study who are different in their backgrounds, some of them have come from small towns, some are from villages and some are from well reputed schools and colleges of Dhaka city, so

consequently they are different in their efficiency level, learning styles and so on. Besides that, these students are different in their learning styles some of them are very slow learners and some are very quick perceiver, some are visual learners and some are auditory learners so we definitely can say that a large number of varieties actually existing among these students. In a language classroom of tertiary level if the students are given opportunity to perform individually by giving power point presentation in a repeated manner then what will be the outcome of this practice and how will they feel about and to what extent this practice will be useful for the tertiary level engineering students who have just entered into this level. In Bangladesh the classrooms are filled with students of different qualities so the outcome will be different undoubtedly but this survey will show us to what extent these students agree with the idea that power point presentation is useful for them and to what extent it is not and what are the other things that we can add with this. This power point presentation is an assignment that can serve as a tool for the assessment of the students speaking ability. The researcher wanted to develop new activities for the students in a language classroom and for that reason attempted an action research by taking power point presentation as a tool to improve language fluency in a semester of 12 weeks. This research aims to see the output of making the students active by giving them the assignment of making power point presentation. Being active in a language classroom is a great challenge for the students now a day so if the above activity keeps the students active for a while then the barriers on the way of speaking fluently in English will disappear soon. The researcher has developed two hypotheses to conduct the research:

- Repeated practice of one activity (power point presentation) for a while promotes active language learning.
- Power point presentation increases speaking fluency by assuring the students' participation.

Purpose of My Research

The purpose of my research is to find out to what extent the students are able to achieve the confidence of speaking fluently and how far they think that power point presentation is effective for them and can bring the best out of them through repeated practice.

Objective

Power point presentation can definitely be one of the activities that are performed in an ESL classroom of engineers to make the students speak without any hesitation. Students who know the grammar part of the English language but hesitate to imply the knowledge can find this activity useful, on the contrary those who already have the skill of presenting something in power point can find it boring. The objective of the researcher was to find out the number of students who find it useful and who find it not quite useful and explore their suggestions to improve the quality of their speaking.

Limitations

The students who were the subject of my research were the students whom the researcher taught for the one year, so there were no students who were from outside this particular group of students. Sometimes it was very difficult to raise the interest of these students to fill up the questionnaire, but there were many students who were so very eager and helpful to learn the output of the research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

An English language teacher who will adopt an eclectic approach to make the students comfortable and

performance oriented is needed for a language classroom. No doubt that there are many activities prescribed for the students to practice in the classroom to get what they required, but most of the cases, it becomes the responsibility of the teachers to select the activities for the students as their facilitator. It's not a myth right now that instead of following a particular text book some particular activities are designed to benefit the students. In a language classroom the use of technology has become a must and the importance of visual aids is also appreciated by both teachers and students. There are many researchers who have already proved the benefit of using visual aids in a language classroom. If the students want to put the emphasis on the productive skill like speaking, then they need to use audio visual aids like power point presentation, describing pictures, doing pair works and so on. It has been proved that language teaching and learning needs innovation and as the field is dynamic in its nature, so researchers attempted many research works on the existing activities to suggest some credible practices for the students based on their research experience. These students who were taught English for 12 years but not in a very active manner can be involved in an active work like giving power point presentation so that this process can be called as 'acquisition' (Ellis, 2003) by Krashen, because the spontaneous involvement of students is ensured through the repetition of one activity in an ESL classroom. In Krashen's "input hypothesis" (Ellis, 2003) he emphasized that if students are given comprehensible input in their process of learning then they can involve themselves more successfully than the usual (Zerin & Khan, 2017). When the teachers use various audio-visual materials in the classroom then the students feel motivated and they can put more concentration in the language classroom because use of audio-visual materials can help them relate the classroom with real life situations that they encounter every day. In this research the students were free to choose the topic of their own interest and while giving presentation they were not evaluated for couple of classes but they were given suggestion to make the imposition of the mistakes low.

According to Harmer, Students who came from different backgrounds and who are different in their types while learning, some students learn by reading, some learn through observation while some learn while listening and some are kinesthetic learner (Harmer, 1983) these students find it motivational while they present an interesting topic appreciated by the classmates. When peer motivation is ensured then the learning process gets accelerated as Harmer mentioned instrumental, integrative, regulative and intrinsic motivation which are capable of determining the degree of effort that learners can make while learning a second language (Zerin & Khan, 2017). While the speaker is actively present in the whole classroom situation by delivering presentation and the other learners are active through listening to the speaker and exploring the interesting topics on which the speaker has made the presentation. It is necessary to develop an appropriate syllabus, appropriate method and appropriate tasks with materials (Bailey & Nunan, 2005). So, if students are provided with appropriate syllabus with some materials that surely arouses their interest can make them confident enough to initiate speaking in any particular society or situation. The report of British Council where (Kachru, 1996) says that the number of users of English as a second language has probably outnumbered those who speak it as a first language, speakers of English as a second language, and approximately 750 million people are believed to use English as a foreign language (Rahman, Rahman, & Begum). No doubt that the ability of speaking in English plays a significant role in every situation where English is the tool of communication, realizing that role researchers like (Goh, 2007) suggested many different methods of speaking in a target language by shaping different tasks like designing and selecting the syllabus and materials and lastly assessing the students. This paper wanted to do the same by selecting one activity for repeated practice.

METHODOLOGY

Participants and the Area of Research

To conduct my research, I have chosen 205 students from 1st year classroom of tertiary level who are going to be engineers in near future. All my students participated spontaneously and answered all the questions I asked them through a questionnaire.

Instruments

I have made a questionnaire filled with 38 questions for my survey. The questionnaire included different questions about the expectation of the students, their prior education, their confidence level and finally what they have got from the classes that they have attended so far. There were two comprehensive questions that wanted to know their suggestion and reaction. About 20 students were selected for an interview so that the answers could be cross checked.

Data Entry

All The data of my survey have been prepared by using MS OFFICE XP and MS Word.

Findings

Students were asked different questions in the questionnaire they were provided with. Those questions were set to realize their improvement level and get feedback from them so that further assignments could be designed to make them benefited. There were 38 questions and among them 2 were open ended questions and the rest were yes/no questions. They were asked 3 questions about their opinion about English language learning, 5 about their previous education, and finally 12 questions were asked to assess their current status after doing so many language classes. This assessment will help to make any possible changes if needed.

These students were asked different questions, the questions that were asked to know their opinion before starting the classes or choosing any particular activity to do in the classroom are given below with the response percentage:

Questions		Yes	No
1.	Do you like to communicate in English?	92%	8%
2.	Do you feel uncomfortable while speaking?	60%	40%
3.	Do you think primary and secondary level education in Bangladesh do justice to English language learners?	30%	70%

About 92% students said that they were willing to communicate in English and the rest of the students 8%, who expressed their unwillingness are those who in their personal interview said that the reasons behind the unwillingness were the fear, anxiety, less confidence and so many other things. The students who said that they like to communicate in English were actually those who know the importance of English in their academic life and can feel the urgency of knowing English to get employment. They, 60% students confessed that they are not capable enough to communicate in English fluently for their discomfort but they want to and according to them, 70% students, the primary and secondary education have not been able to do justice with the students of all backgrounds in Bangladesh.

These students were then asked questions about their previous education and the response of them is given below:

Questions		Yes	No
4.	Did you feel demotivated to speak in English because of the teaching practices in your school and college level?	82%	20%
5.	Do you like the method of English teaching in our primary and secondary level?	64%	36%
6.	Did your English teacher in school used to give lecture in the classroom in English?	44%	56%
7.	Do you think the other three skills of English except speaking were given more importance in your primary and secondary education?	64%	36%
8.	Do you hold your English teachers in school responsible for developing your anxiety speaking in English?	49%	51%

About 82% Students were very clear that they feel demotivated just because of the teaching practices in their school and college level. In their personal interview the students expressed their unwillingness in attending a classroom that is based on identifying grammatical problems and then solve those problems, consequently they were given no or less opportunity to practice speaking only 60% students like the methods that were used to teach them English language and the rest of them did not, those who liked the methods were from the very privileged school and colleges of Bangladesh as they said in their interview. The use of target language in the classroom is very important in an ESL or EFL classroom but the survey says that only 44% students agreed that the language used for giving lecture in the classroom was English though some of them agreed that they like the methods of teaching. About 64% students said that among the 4 skills of a particular language the three of them except speaking were given importance. In a language classroom there could be so many problems but 49% students think that the teachers were responsible for their anxiety, fear and discomfort while speaking.

There were 12 questions (from 9 to) that were asked to evaluate their current status after conducting 25 classes of English language and each class was of 2 hours and 30 minutes. Students gave power point presentation in about 16-18 classes. The questions with the student's response are given below:

Questions		Yes	No
9.	Are you afraid of speaking now?	40%	60%
10.	Do you now think more practice can make you overcome your affective filters (anxiety, fear)?	95%	5%
11.	Did you feel the urge of letting people know of what you have prepared?	63%	37%
12.	Did the repeated activity of making a presentation for English lab on the topics that you liked has made you efficient in English?	73%	27%
13.	Do you think presentation improved your efficiency in using the appropriate grammar where necessary?	75%	25%
14.	Do you think motivation was necessary for learning a particular language?	87%	13%
15.	Do you think other activities could improve your conversational skills in English if they were practiced in the classroom?	92%	8%
16.	Did the different topics presented by different presenters made you put more concentration in the classroom?	91%	9%
17.	Do you think your need has motivated you to initiate the attempt of giving a presentation in English in the classroom?	80%	20%
18.	Did you find preparing presentation for 5-6 classes is sometimes monotonous/boring?	60%	40%
19.	Do you think it is possible to achieve the communicative competence through giving ample number of presentations in the classroom?	69%	31%
20.	Do you think you understand your fellow students and can identify the problems in their speaking skills?	77%	23%

After the class the students were asked whether they were still afraid of speaking or not and the good news was that 60% students said 'NO' where at the very beginning of the class 60% students were uncomfortable while speaking or unwilling to initiate speaking. As the students were not given a proper opportunity to practice speaking in the classroom the above activity (power point presentation) was chosen to provide them enough number of opportunities to practice and the result is really overwhelming because 95% students are now thinking that more practice can help them overcome their affective filters like anxiety, fear, discomfort and so on. They feel like letting people know of what they have prepared, only few of them are still unwilling to feel the same they are of 37%. After attending so many classes for such a long time now they are feeling that this repetition of one activity for such a long time has made them 73% reach their goal. Besides that, they, 75% students, think that this practice has made them use appropriate grammar as they were already acquainted with the grammar of the English language because they learned English as a compulsory subject in their primary, secondary and higher secondary levels. These students who disliked the methods of teaching English in their classroom think that motivation was necessary for them to learn a foreign language, for that reason they were given opportunity to choose their own topic of interest so that they feel interested to let everyone know of what they prepared. In the answer of question 16 their interest was clear that want to know what others are preparing and also want to make them know of what they have prepared because 91% students said that watching people presenting different topics have made them put more concentration in the classroom. Certain things were very clear from their answer, one of them is that they want to learn to use English language but don't want to just solve the grammatical problems which ultimately will not give them anything other than some structural knowledge. They want to learn the language English that can help them in their academic writing as the medium of writing in tertiary level in Bangladesh is in English. Peer observation is important for getting an appropriate feedback and the survey result says that 77% students are capable of identifying the problems of their fellow students and can give them feedback.

Each and every activity practiced in the ESL or EFL classroom will not bring the same result from every student as they have come from different backgrounds. Power point presentation as an assignment might not get equal appreciation from every student of the class and their response clearly shows that because 60% students found it monotonous sometimes but 40 % students did not find it boring at all. In their personal interview the students who said that they sometimes find it boring were those from privileged backgrounds who already were capable of speaking while they came into the class for the first time so they expected something new to be designed for them but as it was a mixed classroom of all backgrounds students so it was important to take decision for the students who were large in number. Here the number of students who are now not afraid of speaking is 60%, and 73% think that they have gained a certain level of efficiency in speaking.

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION

As the goal of the researcher was to check the achievement of language fluency of the students to a certain level by creating an active classroom where they have to participate. **'Repeated practice of one activity (power point presentation) for a while promotes active language learning'** this was the first hypothesis behind this study. Among these tertiary levels some had knowledge about power point presentation and some did not but participation in the classroom was mandatory for these students. All the students' performance was not similar in the initial classes and the response rate was very poor, because 60% students before starting this activity said that they are feeling uncomfortable while speaking. With the active participation of students' class was started and there was no escape from participation however the performance was. Later, at the end of the classes the number of uncomfortable students came down from 60%

to 40 %, which surely confirms the first hypothesis of this study. Though active participation of every individual student was ensured but the performance was not as equal as expected from them because according to the theory of multiple intelligence theory of Harmer (2003), every individual learner is different in his or her learning style and use of visual aids and involvement in kinesthetic process can bring success in the students' ways of learning (Zerin & Khan, 2017). students who were uncomfortable at the beginning now among them 77% students understand the flaws of their classmates which means they participated in the activity and 69% students have agreed that they have acquired communicative competence these confirms the second hypothesis **'Power point presentation increases speaking fluency by assuring the students participation'** of this study. These students are engineers and they need English for a specific purpose so instead of practicing many activities in the classroom giving emphasis on one particular activity can be more fruitful as the above study tries to prove.

LIMITATION OF THIS STUDY

The first problem of this study is that students who never put any emphasis on this one particular skill of a language suddenly after 12 years study of that language they had to practice actively a skill they always heard about but was never practiced by them this feeling automatically raised the level of their affective filters. Other problem was that this classroom should be equipped with facilities like electricity, laptop and projector and sometimes it becomes a problem to ensure all the facilities together. Sometimes repetition of one activity **becomes** monotonous for the students.

CONCLUSIONS

In total Students found this activity quite interesting as they were given opportunity to choose their own topic of presentation and those who are fond of using technology they found it more interesting because they could let others know about their own capabilities and students observing their classmates get motivated to work on their own and enhancing their ability of speaking so through this peer motivation can also be ensured.

APPENDIX

Survey of the Output and Future Prospects of English Lab

Name:

Exam roll:

1.	Which activities besides PowerPoint presentation you think will be beneficial?		
		YES	NO
	Pair work		
	Group work		
	Extempore speech		
2.	Watching videos		
	Do you think despite having different background like your classmates, the above activities can be performed in one classroom?		
		YES	NO
	3. Do you think the activities mentioned above can bring the best out of every student in your classroom?		
		YES	NO
4.	Did all the students participated spontaneously in the activities performed in the classroom?		
		YES	NO
5.	Do you think speaking was the tough skill among the four language skills?		
		YES	NO
6.	Have you been able to solve the problems that you faced at the initial classes?		

		YES	NO
7.	Do you think more practice can make you overcome your affective filters (anxiety, fear)?		
		YES	NO
8.	Did the repeated activity of making a presentation for English lab on the topics that you liked has made you efficient in English?		
		YES	NO
9.	Did you find memorization helpful?		
		YES	NO
10.	Do you think presentation improved your efficiency in using the appropriate grammar where necessary?		
		YES	NO
11.	Did your teachers motivated you to learn English or they were the fear factors in your school and college level?		
		YES	NO
12.	Do you think motivation was necessary for learning a particular language?		
		YES	NO
13.	Did you feel the urge of letting people know of what you have prepared?		
		YES	NO
14.	Do you think other activities could improve your conversational skills in English if they were practiced in the classroom?		
		YES	NO
15.	Did the different topics presented by different presenters made you put more concentration in the classroom?		
		YES	NO
16.	Do you think your need has motivated you to initiate the attempt of giving a presentation in English in the classroom?		
		YES	NO
17.	Did you find preparing presentation for 5-6 classes is monotonous/boring?		
		YES	NO
18.	Do you think it is possible to achieve the communicative competence through giving ample number of presentations in the classroom?		
		YES	NO
19.	Do you think your English teacher in school and colleges could do something to make your English better?		
		YES	NO
20.	Was there any difference in your confidence level from presentation 1 to presentation 6?		
		YES	NO
21.	Were you interrupted while giving a presentation in the first 3-4 classes?		
		YES	NO
22.	Do you like to communicate in English?		
		YES	NO
23.	Were the classes fulfilling the criteria of communicative classes?		
		YES	NO
24.	Do you think communicative language syllabus helped you develop your English in your primary and secondary education level?		
		YES	NO
25.	Do you think you understand your fellow students and can identify the problems in their speaking skills?		
		YES	NO

26.	Do you like the method of English teaching in our primary and secondary level?		
		YES	NO
27.	Did you know that there are four language skills for every language?		
		YES	NO
28.	Do you find any difference among the English classes that you attended in your school and college education?		
		YES	NO
29.	Do you think that your anxiety in attending English classes was developed in your primary and secondary level?		
		YES	NO
30.	Did your English teacher in school used to give lecture in the classroom in English?		
		YES	NO
31.	Did your teacher in college used to give lecture in English?		
		YES	NO
32.	Do you think the other three skills of English except speaking were given more importance in your primary and secondary education?		
		YES	NO
33.	Do you hold your English teachers in school responsible for developing your anxiety while speaking in English?		
		YES	NO
34.	Are you afraid of speaking?		
		YES	NO
35.	Do you feel uncomfortable while speaking?		
		YES	NO
36.	Do you think primary and secondary level education in Bangladesh do justice to English language learners?		
		YES	NO
37.	Do you have any suggestion about the activities that you think should be practiced in the lab class?		
38.	What will be your suggestion for the teachers and learners of English in primary and secondary levels in Bangladesh?		

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